FOUNDED BY QUAID-I-AZAM MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAH

DAWN

Saturday
January 10, 2026
Rajab 20, 1447

KARACHI

Rs 35.00
18 Pages
Vol. LXXX No. 10
Regd. No. SS-022

www.dawn.com

CM Afridi finds Karachi 'more welcoming'

• Praises PPP-led Sindh government, says 'democratic traditions still alive' in the province • Criticises PTI founder's treatment in jail, calls it inhumane • Plans to visit Quaid's Mazar tomorrow • Hyderabad bar rescinds invitation; workers accuse Karachi police of razing camp

By Imran Ayub and Imtiaz Ali

KARACHI: After a "bitter Punjab experience", Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi arrived in Karachi on Friday to launch a "street movement" for the release of PTI founder Imran Khan, praising the PPP-led Sindh government's reception and saying the democratic legacy of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto still thrives in the province.

Speaking to journalists at the Karachi Press Club, CM Afridi compared his arrival in the metropolis with his recent visit to Lahore, saying Karachi had been far more welcoming. "The democratic traditions of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto are still alive in Sindh," he said.

The KP chief minister said his four-day visit to Sindh was aimed at preparations for the PTI's street movement. Recalling his Punjab tour, he said it was not a good experience. "Wherever we went to eat food, the lights of that area were turned off," he told reporters.

CM Afridi said the PTI had received verbal approval from the Sindh government for Sunday's rally, though no written response had yet been issued.

'No talks until PTI allowed to meet Imran': Page 3

"Imran Khan did not struggle for power, but for the independence of the judiciary, true democracy and freedom of expression. This is why he has been imprisoned," he said, adding that the PTI founder was being treated in an inhumane manner in jail and kept in the same place as terrorists.

Responding to questions, CM Afridi said he saw traces of Benazir Bhutto and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Sindh's governance and expressed satisfaction over it.

In another response, he referred to a peace jirga held in the provincial assembly where all political parties agreed on 15 points. "One of these points was that military operations are not a problem, but if one is carried out, it would be thuggery," he said.

Elaborating further, CM Afridi said decisions could not be made behind closed doors and stressed that without involving tribal elders and local leadership as stakeholders, peace would never be achieved. "What guarantee is there that peace will return after a military operation?" he asked, adding that if the prime minister convened an all-parties meeting on terrorism, he would attend. "Only a joint decision by all political parties, and the provincial and federal governments, can bring peace," he asserted.

From the airport, the KP chief minister's convoy took six hours to reach the press club, accompanied by a large number of party supporters. Sindh Labour Minister Saeed Ghani welcomed him at the airport and presented him with a Sindhi cap and Ajrak. PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja also accompanied the chief minister.

CM Afridi boarded the flight for Karachi from Islamabad airport, where he faced delays. KP Minister for Local Government Meena Khan

Continued on Page 5

SPORTING a Sindhi Topi, presented to him upon his arrival in Karachi by PPP's Saeed Ghani, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi takes a selfie with adoring supporters.—Shakil Adil / White Star

Punjab CM wants hospital staff to wear 'body cams'

• Seeks ban on mobile phone use by doctors, nurses during duty hours
• Move comes on heels of public complaints about government hospitals
• Order follows similar instructions issued to anti-encroachment staff

By Zulqernain Tahir

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Friday made it mandatory for hospital staff across the province to wear body cameras, in a bid to ensure transparency and accountability after receiving public complaints about government hospitals.

Body cameras, or body cams, are wearable audio and video recording devices used to capture footage of official action for the sake of evidence.

While CM Maryam had deemed it mandatory for field officials to wear body cams last month, following corruption complaints against the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (Pera), that order is yet to be implemented.

Presiding over a meeting on provincial health projects, the CM said wearing body cams would be mandatory for nurses, ward boys, security guards, and pharmacy staff.

The CM said public hospital administration must ensure the comprehensive daily steam cleaning of facilities by 9am. "There must be a ban on the use of mobile phones by doctors and nurses during duty hours, stressing that patient care must remain the foremost priority," she ordered.

To strengthen hospital management, the meeting approved the creation of a Medical Superintendent (MS) pool, with salary increments linked directly to performance. Community health inspectors were also assigned the responsibility of conducting hospital surveys to monitor service delivery.

The provincial chief executive further directed the establishment of a data analysis centre to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of public welfare initiatives in the health sector.

Revised list of medicines

CM Maryam also directed the preparation of a revised medicine list for government hospitals and called for a foolproof mechanism to ensure an uninterrupted supply of essential drugs.

Additionally, the chief minister ordered the formation of a dedicated committee to finalise the updated medicines list.

She expressed concern over reports of medicine shortages despite substantial budget allocations, noting that Rs80 billion was being spent on medicines and any lapse in delivery to patients was unacceptable.

The meeting also reviewed proposals to modernise public hospitals, including the potential use of Chinese-manufactured medical equipment to upgrade healthcare facilities across the province.

It was informed that over 2,500 doctors had been recruited over the past two years and that

Continued on Page 5

Turkiye looks to join Pak-Saudi defence pact

Monitoring Desk

TURKIYE is seeking to join the recently-formed defence alliance between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, *Bloomberg* reported on Friday, in a move that could "shift the balance of power in the Middle East and beyond".

The deal, initially signed by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in September, states that "any aggression" against one country is considered an attack on all, which mirrors Article 5 of the Nato charter, of which Turkiye is the largest military partner, after the US.

Quoting people familiar with the matter, the *Bloomberg* report said talks are "at an advanced stage and a deal is very likely".

The expanded alliance would make sense because Turkiye's interests increasingly overlap with those of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in South Asia, the Middle East and even Africa, sources said.

Turkiye also sees the pact as a way of strengthening security and deterrents when there are questions over the reliability of the US that has strong military ties with all three countries and President Donald Trump's commitment to Nato.

Saudi Arabia brings financial clout, Pakistan has nuclear capability, ballistic missiles and manpower, while Turkiye has the military experience and has developed a

Continued on Page 11

PTI asking for CBMs as it is 'afraid of TTP': Tarar

Information minister slams lack of facilities for education, healthcare in KP

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Friday accused the opposition PTI of initiating 'confidence-building measures with the TTP', stating that they didn't call the latter 'terrorists' as they were afraid of being attacked.

"The spokespersons of the political party are afraid of talking about the terrorist group, as they have taken exemption from it by extending an 'olive branch' to them," said Tarar while addressing a press conference alongside former ANP senator Zahid Khan.

He also said the PTI's social media accounts did not utter a single word for the martyrs of the armed forces just because they were afraid of terrorists.

The information minister expressed these views after playing a clip from a *Hum News* TV programme in which the host openly called the TTP a terrorist group, while adviser to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister, Shafiullah Jan, insisted there are "groups within the TTP" and among them those who were "against the state are terrorists".

"They are afraid of saying anything regarding the TTP," Mr Tarar reiterated, and then cited the example of ex-lawmaker of ANP Samar Haroon Bilour who spoke courageously against terrorists in the assembly even after losing her husband and father-in-law in terrorist attacks.

While blaming the PTI for "bringing back terrorists" and settling them in KP after elimination of terrorism, the minister said, "Their leader [incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan] used to call terrorists martyrs."

Smuggling, misogyny

Mr Tarar said that a political-terror-crime nexus prevailed in KP. "Political elements have a nexus with terrorists, and crime links them through the smuggling of oil, drugs, consumer goods, timber, and tobacco," he said, adding that it forms a bridge with political leaders at one end and terrorists at the other.

"PTI does not condemn terrorists because they earn money for political leaders and assist them in running their businesses," he said.

He challenged the PTI to share the names of ten terrorist groups that were "good, pro-Pakistani, and whose services are for the country".

He said, "When it comes to maligning

Continued on Page 5

PM backs use of digital wallets for Ramazan package

Orders solarisation of loss-making electricity feeders

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed ministries and officials concerned that subsidy amounts for the Ramazan package for the deserving people should be distributed through digital wallets so that their dignity and respect was not compromised.

The prime minister was chairing a meeting to review the proposed Ramazan package and third-party validation of the last year's package.

He said the federal government had established a transparent system to provide subsidised essential food items to the underprivileged during Ramazan, replacing a decades-old corrupt system of financial irregularities and mismanagement in Utility Stores.

During the meeting, he praised all relevant institutions and ministries on the report by a reputable audit firm regarding the transparency of last year's Ramazan package.

He noted that deserving individuals were deprived of their rights due to corruption in Utility Stores.

Financial support and social well-being for the poor and the middle class are among the top priorities of the government, the prime minister said.

He said providing subsidy amounts to the public through digital wallets will prove to be a milestone in achieving a cashless economy.

"The inclusion of the State Bank of Pakistan in the distribution of the Ramazan package will promote a cashless economy," the prime minister said.

He stressed all relevant ministries and institutions to ensure maximising the scope and inclusion of the underprivileged in receiving subsidies.

He also directed officials concerned to present a comprehensive strategy containing practical measures for a better and more effective disbursement than the last year's Ramazan package as soon as possible.

He also directed them to ensure that eligible low-income households were included in the assistance programme to the maximum extent possible. He also called for the creation of a digital dashboard and a monitoring system to oversee implementation.

PM Shehbaz said a Social Protection Wallet system was being introduced under the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), under which

Continued on Page 11

Tehran points finger at US as protests turn political

• Khamenei claims 'rioters' are trying to appease Trump; Araghchi says Americans, Israelis 'directly' involved • Exiled Pahlavi urges Washington to intervene • Officials report significant damage to public properties; nationwide internet blackout, flights grounded

DUBAI: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Friday that "rioters" were trying to "please" US President Donald Trump as anti-government protests continued for a 13th consecutive day, with an internet blackout imposed in the country.

"There are some agitators who want to please the American president by destroying public property," Khamenei said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also directly accused the US and Israel of fanning the flames of dissent.

"This is what the Americans and Israelis have stated, that they are directly intervening in the protests in Iran," Araghchi said during a visit to Lebanon.

"They are trying to transform the peaceful protests into divisive and violent ones."

(LEFT) A screengrab shows pro-govt demonstrators chanting slogans as they march along a main street in Khorramabad in western Iran; while the photo on the right shows burning vehicles during anti-govt unrest in Tehran.—AFP/Reuters

He dismissed the possibility of foreign military intervention as low, citing past failures of such attempts.

On the other hand, Reza Pahlavi, the son of Iran's former shah who is living in exile, has requested that Trump "be ready to intervene to help the people of Iran".

"Mr President, this is an urgent and immediate call for your attention, support, and action," Pahlavi wrote in a post on X. "The people will be on the streets again in an hour. I am asking you to help."

What and where?

Iran International reported that slogans have shifted from economic grievances toward overtly political and anti-government chants. The outlet also highlighted calls for the return of the monarchy, a system overthrown by the popular Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Earlier, *Reuters* had noted its inability to verify a huge volume of what appeared to be AI-generated videos of the events being circulated on social media, *BBC Verify* claimed to verify and map the locations of some gatherings.

Their reports highlighted significant clustering in the West (Kurdish and Lor regions), the Central corridor including Isfahan and the capital, Tehran, and the Southeast in Zahedan.

According to a *BBC*-published map, protest locations include Tehran, Karaj, Qazvin, Qom, Arak, Mashhad, Sari, Babol, Rasht, Lahijan, Kermanshah, Hamadan, Sanandaj, Ardabil, Tabriz, Urmia, Khorramabad, Borujerd, Dorud, Azna, Kuhdasht, Nurabad, Ilam, Malekshahi,

Continued on Page 11

ON OTHER PAGES

Remittances hit FY26 peak in December

Workers' remittances in December rose to the highest level of the current financial year, reaching $3.6 billion, largely driven by continued incentives for sending money through formal channels and relative stability in the exchange rate. The inflows showed a growth of over 16pc on a year-on-year basis. The government is expecting $40bn in remittances for the current fiscal year. **Page 9**

No trade deal as 'Modi didn't call Trump'

US President Donald Trump's humiliation of Indian PM Narendra Modi continued on Friday, amid allegations by US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick that a trade deal hanging fire between them could not be concluded because Modi did not call Trump to seal the pact. The allegation was countered, albeit somewhat feebly by India's external affairs ministry. **Page 12**

Plus...

DAWN young World